



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Glacier National Park
West Glacier, Montana 59936

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L 1425

MAY 26 2010

Dear Landowner:

Over the last several months, Glacier National Park, in conjunction with the State of Montana and other National Park Units in the west, has been evaluating the risks and consequences of a possible introduction of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), such as zebra and quagga mussels, into park lakes. Preliminary assessment of boater use patterns and lake habitat conditions suggests that several extremely damaging aquatic invasive species have the potential to be transported to, and establish populations in Glacier National Park. The introduction of one of these species into a popular lake like Lake McDonald could have significant impacts on the natural ecosystem, recreation, quality of life, and property values for park landowners. As a primary stake holder in this issue, we would like to enlist your help in preventing the introduction of these devastating species into the park.

Beginning June 1, 2010, the park will require a permit to launch all motorized vessels in any of the park's lakes. We recognize that many of the park's landowners keep their boats in Glacier National Park for the entire season. The park will issue a season-long permit to landowners who certify that their boat is not used outside of Glacier National Park during the boating season.


Season long permits are available at the Headquarters front desk in West Glacier, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For the general public, permits will be valid for 14 days, provided the boat is not launched in waters outside of Flathead or Glacier Counties within those 14 days. Visitor boat launch permits will be available at all park permit offices and visitor centers during normal business hours. The boat and trailer should be present and available for NPS inspection at the time of permit application.

If you use your boat in waters outside of Glacier National Park during the season, we require that you re-apply for your season long permit upon your return to the park. Please ensure that if you launch your boat elsewhere, your boat is clean, drained, and dry before returning it to the park for a new permit and potential NPS inspection. Manually remove all mud, plants, and animals from your boat, and allow it to dry thoroughly before bringing any boat to the park. Be sure to check for any standing water in the bilge area, as well as any live-wells and ballast tanks, as these are areas that are often overlooked or more difficult to address when drying/cleaning a boat. This is a good AIS prevention practice and should be followed when moving your boat between waterways. If you have used your boat only in waters of Montana, a hot pressure wash available in most self service car washes will generally provide adequate cleaning. If you launch your boat in waters known to contain AIS, we ask that in addition to a complete wash of your boat, you allow your boat to dry thoroughly for 7 days in hot dry weather (up to 30 days in cool moist weather) before re-applying for a permit. Your boat may be subject to inspection prior to obtaining a permit.



Glacier National Park takes very seriously the threat AIS pose. We need your help in protecting park waters from the severe ecological, recreational and economic devastation many lakes in the U.S. have already experienced. If you have any questions about the permit process or information on the threats posed by AIS, please contact Fisheries Biologist Chris Downs at (406) 888-7917, or Branch Chief of Ranger Activities Patrick Suddath at (406) 888-7831. With your help, we will work together to keep these species out of Glacier National Park so that park lakes continue to provide the recreational and scenic opportunities that make Glacier a special place. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,


ACTING FOR
Chas Cartwright
Superintendent

Enclosure - Press Release, NEWS 10-36



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park
International Peace Park
Biosphere Reserve
World Heritage Site

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Glacier National Park News Release

May 17, 2010

For Immediate Release

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NEWS10-36

New Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program at Glacier

Threat of invasive plants and animals prompts need for boater education and boat inspections

WEST GLACIER, MONT. – Glacier National Park officials today announced that during the 2010 boating and fishing season the park will begin implementing a program to reduce the risk of unintentional introduction of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) into park waters. The program includes both education and accountability of all boat owners and operators.

Park superintendent Chas Cartwright stated, "Beginning June 1, 2010, all motorized boats entering the park will be required to obtain a free boat launch permit prior to launching. Motorboat operators will be required to certify that their boat is free of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) to qualify for a permit." Permits are valid for 14 days, provided a vessel is not launched outside of Flathead or Glacier counties during those 14 days. Park land owners and park residents may obtain an annual permit for vessels operated solely within Glacier National Park. Persons failing to obtain a launch permit, or violating the terms of the permit, are subject to fines and possibly additional sentencing.

"Non-native fish species have already had significant negative impacts on native fish populations within the park and the potential for unintentional introduction of additional AIS to park waters is prompting park managers to take proactive steps to reduce these risks," said park superintendent Cartwright. The potential for introduction and establishment of populations of non-native invasive aquatic plants (e.g. Eurasian watermilfoil), aquatic animals (e.g. zebra and quagga 'kwa-gə\ mussels), or diseases (e.g. whirling disease) pose risks to the park's native aquatic ecosystems as well as to the use and enjoyment of park resources by visitors.

Invasive species impact native species and their habitats through competition, predation, displacement, habitat disruption and/or the spread of disease and/or parasites. Cartwright added, "Once AIS are introduced and established, some species are virtually impossible to remove from the ecosystem. This has proven to have a significant impact on local economies where AIS have infected waters. A 2006 study by the University of Notre Dame estimates that the Great Lakes area is losing \$200 million a year to invasive species due to lost fishing, wildlife viewing and increased water processing costs."

In 2009, Glacier National Park conducted a limited study of motorized boat use and identified boats registered in 14 states and two Canadian provinces entering the park. Eight of these states have established populations of zebra and/or quagga mussels. Although Montana remains zebra and quagga mussel free, trailered boats with mussels attached to the boat and/or the trailer have been detected in Montana, as well as in other western states and Canadian provinces.

Boats have also entered the park after having been launched in waters containing aquatic invasive plants, such as Eurasian watermilfoil. According to Cartwright, Glacier National Park is cooperating with the State of Montana to help insure that no Montana waters become infested with these damaging, non-native species.

In general, boats and boat trailers should be cleaned with a high pressure hose with hot water such as those found at car washes and dried to make sure they are not transporting aquatic invasive species. A boat inspection may be required by NPS staff prior to issuance of a launch permit for park waters. Boaters failing an aquatic invasive species inspection will be required to clean and dry their boat before being re-inspected in order to qualify for a permit. Boats found to be infested with certain AIS may be impounded and quarantined for up to 30 days or until adequate decontamination can be arranged.

No cleaning facility is available in the park. Suitable facilities can be found in Browning on the East side of the park or Columbia Falls on the west side of the park as well as elsewhere in Flathead and Glacier counties. A permit may be denied if park staff determines a vessel poses a high risk of carrying aquatic invasive species. Boaters on Waterton Lake must comply with all requirements set out by Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada.

Permits are free and may be obtained at any park Backcountry Permit Office during normal business hours beginning June 1. Permit offices are located in Apgar Village, St. Mary Visitor Center, Two Medicine and Many Glacier Ranger Stations and the Polebridge Entrance Station. Permits may also be issued on a limited basis at visitor center information desks and at park headquarters in West Glacier. Normal business hours are typically 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; however, permit offices and visitor centers extend hours in summer months. Park staff will attempt to make permits available after hours on a case-by-case basis but boaters are encouraged to plan ahead and arrive during business hours to ensure a permit is available. Boaters arriving outside of normal hours of operation may call (406) 888-7800 for permit inquiries.

Cartwright concluded, "If a park visitor ensures their boat is clean and ready for inspection, the permitting process will be very quick."

Before bringing a boat to Glacier National Park, all boaters should:

- 1) Drain all water from their boat and trailer (including bilge, engine, ballast tanks and live wells) before leaving a body of water.
- 2) Clean all mud, plants and animals from the boat and trailer before leaving a body of water.
- 3) Thoroughly dry all of their fishing and boating equipment (including the trailer) before bringing a boat to Glacier. Adult zebra mussels can remain alive for up to 30 days out of the water, and mussel larvae can live in small amounts of standing water.

A boater check-list is available on the Glacier National Park website along with other information on AIS (such as descriptions and images to help with identification) at: <http://www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/boating.htm>. The check-list is intended to help visitors who wish to bring their boats to the park to make certain they meet park requirements for launching only clean and dry boats in any park waters. Anglers are reminded that all live bait except for earthworms, maggots and meal worms, is prohibited. Prohibited bait includes but is not limited to fish/fish parts, leeches and crayfish.

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